

Bible Characters – Abraham and Sarah (Genesis 11:27 to 25:19)

The story of Abraham and Sarah, is among the most memorable records in the Bible, revealing the challenges that come with a godly walk with God by faith.

Called by God, Abram (who is later renamed Abraham, as is his wife Sarai, renamed Sarah) shows his faith in the Lord, by heeding His call in obedience (Hebrews 11:8), leaving behind his original surroundings, Ur of the Chaldeans, at age 75 (Genesis 12:1-6). While he and his wife are not always faithful to God, God remains faithful in the promises He makes to Abram, especially that he will be the father of a great nation and a blessing to all families on earth (Genesis 12:2-3).

God's covenant promise to Abraham is unique, in that God Himself seals it (Genesis 15:1-21), placing His own eternal seal of grace here. This sets in motion the Lord's redemptive plan, culminating in the arrival and birth of Jesus Christ as Messiah, God Himself in the flesh, as Saviour of mankind (recorded in Jesus' genealogies in Matthew 1:2; Luke 3:34).

Notably, Abram's faith does waiver revealing him as a real person with fears and doubts like all of us, especially in trying to secure an heir – in their own strength – as prompted by his wife. This results in the birth of Ishmael (Genesis 16:1-16). Yet God remains faithful to His promise of a rightful heir, and after having changed the couples' names, Sarah gives birth to Isaac, securing him as Abraham's descendent (Genesis 21:1-6). When God tests Abraham's faith, asking him to sacrifice his son Isaac (Genesis 22:1-19) Abraham's faith has matured to the point, where he believes that God can even return his son back to life (Genesis 22:5). This is a foreshadowing of the final and ultimate eternal sacrifice that Jesus Christ does for us on the cross. While circumcision, remained the mark of the covenant between God and Abraham (Genesis 17:9-14) this is no longer a requirement for anyone entering a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, who only requires a repentant "circumcised heart," (Romans 2:29) for anyone coming to Him (Galatians 3:29; Ephesians 2:8-9).

For further study:

Gardner P. *New International Encyclopedia of Bible Characters: The Complete Who's Who in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001.

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